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A PAIR OF CITATIONS FROM THE DIATESSARON.

BY ISAAC H. HALL.

IN the catalogue of Christian books and writers composed by ʿEbed-yeshuʿ (or ʿOdîshoʿ, as the Nestorians pronounce it), written about A.D. 1300, occurs the passage:

"Yeshuʿdad (or Îshoʿdad) of the same place [i.e. Ḥadath or Ḥadith, the place of Solomon, the writer just previously mentioned by ʿEbed-yeshuʿ] composed an exposition of the New [Testament], and also the book of the Beitʰ Mautʰhê [i.e. part of the burial service] in a concise manner [*lit.* in a word of brevity]."

Yeshuʿdad flourished about A.D. 852; his Commentary on the New Testament is still extant, though not yet printed. There is at least one manuscript of it in this country, and I think part of a second. I myself lately came into possession of a third, but it contains only his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew. My manuscript is written in fine Nestorian script, dated the 21 Adar in the year 2041 of the Greeks, or 21 March, 1730 A.D. The testimony of this writer to a reading or to a passage in Tatian's Diatessaron is at least of as high a grade as the Arabic version published by Ciasca, and I therefore give one testimony therefrom, which differs entirely from the Arabic version. I give the text and context, as the matter is quite an important one in several aspects. The comment has to do with Matthew iii. 5, last clause. The text is as follows, omitting most of the needless Nestorian pointing, except in important words.

ܘܡܬܟܠܬܗ ܡܩܒܪܐ ܘܕܚܠܐ ܕܒܪܐ ❖

ܕܢܬܩܫܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܐܡܪ. ܡܬܟܠܬܗ ܠܘܬ ܕܒܪܐ ܘܣܒܠܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ ❖

ܐܣܬܟܠܐ. ܡܦܩܪܐ ܠܘܬ ܝܚܝܕܐ ܐܠܗ ܩܕܡܐ ܕܕܦܠܚܝܢ ܠܐܣܛܘܟܣܝܢ. ܗ̄:

ܠܝܘܪܕ. ܘܠܘ ܗܘ ܒܣܦܝܢ. ܕܐܬܝܢ ܡܢܗܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܦܣܝܣܣ.

ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܩܡܨܝܢ. ܦܪܣܐܝܬ ܕܝܢ ܡܢܓ܀ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ. ܕܥܩ̈ܪܐ
ܐܢܘܢ ܕܡܬܩܪܝܢ ܩܘܫܐ. ܕܒܐܣܟܡܐ ܡܢ ܕܡܝܢ ܠܩܡ̈ܨܐ. ܒܛܥܡܐ
ܕܝܢ ܚܠܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܫܐ܀ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ. ܕܠܘܒ̈ܟܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܟܠ ܕܝܠܘ̈ܢܬܐ.
ܘܐܦ ܠܕܒܫܐ ܗܢܐ: ܠܘ ܗܢܐ ܚܠܝܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ. ܐܠܐ ܗܘ ܡܪܝܪܐ
ܘܣܢܝܐ. ܕܥܒ̈ܕܝ ܕܒܘܪ̈ܝܬܐ ܕܒܪܐ܀ ܐܝܟ ܡܦܫܩܢܐ. ܩܡ̈ܨܐ ܗ̈ܘܘ
ܦܪ̈ܚܬܐ. ܘܕܒܫܐ ܕܟܝܢܐ: ܕܡܢ ܚܡܝܡܘܬ ܐܬܪܐ ܘܡܘܙܓܝܗ ܐܐܪ
ܕܐܡܝܢܘ ܡܫܟܚܝܢ ܠܗ܀

Or, translated:

"*And his food was locusts and wild honey.* — But the Diatessaron says, His food indeed was honey and milk of the mountains. Others, The locusts indeed are tender roots that resemble parsnep, that is, *gezar* [i.e. جزر], and not very pleasant to the taste; which some call *qamsîs,* but others *qamsîn,* but in Persian *mang.* Others that they are roots which are called *qauche*, which in form indeed is like locusts, but in taste sweet, like honey. Others, that they are shoots of plants; and also that this [is meant] by the honey. This is not sweet, they say; but that is bitter and loathsome which wild bees make. According to the Expositor [i.e. Theodore of Mopsuestia], locusts are winged creatures, and the honey is [that] of nature; that is from the warmth of place [i.e. its *habitat* is warm], and its constitution air since it is continually found there [*lit.* they continually find it there]."

Yeshu'dad proceeds to remark upon these "theories of John," and to draw allegorical and edifying conclusions, into which we need not enter. The noteworthy fact is that the Diatessaron, if it is here quoted correctly — and we can conceive no reason why it should not be so, but rather see every reason to the contrary — actually altered the reading of the Gospel to fit Tatian's Encratite tenets. Here I leave the matter; but the restorers and students of Tatian cannot so leave it.

I will, however, give another citation which confirms this. It is from the Storehouse of Mysteries of Gregory Bar Hebraeus, in the Commentary on Matthew. I quote from Spanuth's edition (Göttingen, 1879), p. 8.

ܘܡܐܟܘܠܬܗ ܩܡ̈ܨܐ ܘܕܒܫܐ ܕܒܪܐ. ܒܦܬܚܐ ܒܝܬ. ܝܘܢܝܐ ܕܕܒܪܐ
ܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܗ̄ ܐܢܫ̈ܝܢ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܕܠܥܩ̈ܪܐ ܘܡܘܬܩ̈ܐ ܢܨ̈ܒܬܐ ܦܢܐ ܩܡ̈ܨܐ
ܘܒܕܝܐܛܐܣܪܘܢ ܚܠܒܐ ܘܕܒܫܐ ܟܬܝܒ.

Or, translated:

"*And his food was locusts and wild honey*—with *pethacha beth* [i.e. in the word ܕܒܪܐ]; the Greek ܕܕܒܪܐ with vowelless *beth*. With regard to this, some say that 'locusts' means roots and sweet plants (*qauche*); but in the Diatessaron 'milk and honey' is written."

It can scarcely be doubted that Bar Hebraeus had good evidence for his statement. He *may* have had Yeshuʿdad for his authority, but the form and matter of his writing look as if he knew something more of the Diatessaron than that paragraph of Yeshuʿdad could give him. Is it not possible that the Diatessaron was known to him, and thus was actually extant down to the latter half of the thirteenth century?